

Summarised inspection findings

Loudon-Montgomery Primary School and Nursery Class

North Ayrshire Council

12 March 2019

Key contextual information

Louden-Montgomery Primary School Nursery Class is situated in Irvine, North Ayrshire. The nursery is part of the 1140 hours trials and has expanded their provision since January 2018. The setting operates from 8am until 5.45pm. The setting can accommodate 30 children aged three years to those not yet attending school and 15 children aged from two to three years. At the time of inspection there was 45 children aged three years to those not yet attending school and 13 two year olds on the roll.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- There is a joint vision, values and aims across the school and nursery, which are currently being reviewed and refreshed. It will be important to involve all nursery stakeholders fully in this process. We discussed with the nursery team the need to ensure that moving forward the vision, values and aims are relevant to the nursery class and are in line with current thinking and best practice.
- The nursery has experienced significant changes since January 2018. This includes an increase in the number of children, new practitioners, revised opening hours and a new management structure. The practitioner team have worked hard to overcome the many challenges they have faced, in particular relating to staffing. Practitioners demonstrate an enthusiastic and professional approach to their role, displaying a sense of collective responsibility and commitment in taking forward improvements. The nursery has received support from the local authority and the school's senior management team.
- The nursery management team have worked in partnership with practitioners to implement the required changes to accommodate the increase to 1140 hours in a positive manner. Practitioners are reflective in their practice and strive to meet the needs of children and families in their community. The manager has developed close links with settings in the authority and welcomes the opportunity for professional dialogue and collegiate working. We discussed the need for further opportunities for the whole team to visit other settings and engage in whole team professional development.
- An improvement plan is in place across the school and nursery with appropriate priorities identified. There is evidence of the identified objectives being addressed throughout the environment. Leadership opportunities for practitioners are limited, however there is an identified lead for phonological awareness. Opportunities for all practitioners to develop their own skills in leading improvements should be explored further.
- Self-evaluation is at the early stages across all aspects of the nursery. Information relating to the 1140 hours pilot has helpfully been collated, enabling ongoing changes to be made to

practice. The team are at the very early stages of using the national self-evaluation framework, 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to evaluate the quality of provision.

- Senior leaders need to urgently establish robust processes for monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the service, including the quality of learning and teaching. To ensure this is effective, monitoring and evaluation needs to be carried out in a focused way.
- Planned improvements now require to be specific, clear and measurable. Improved strategic leadership has the potential to improve this and ensure an appropriate pace of change in order to make a positive difference for children and families.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Practitioners understand the importance of nurturing and caring relationships. As a result, most children feel happy and secure in the nursery.
- Children aged two to three years enjoy their time in the nursery. Their playroom is open and bright, and provides cosy spaces where children can rest. Children have ready access to a range of attractive, open-ended resources for play. They are encouraged to explore and investigate indoors and out using their senses. Practitioners play alongside children. They provide sensitive and caring support to help them to engage in their play as fully as possible. Flexible and responsive routines enable practitioners to adapt learning experiences to the needs of individual children well.
- The majority of children aged three to five years demonstrate increasing confidence in making choices from available resources and sharing their play. They show appropriate motivation in their play. Practitioners strive to enrich the learning environment of the nursery. This provides increased opportunities for children to initiate their learning across a range of engaging contexts indoors and out. A few children need more focused support to enable them to engage in their play throughout the session.
- Interactions are consistently positive and supportive. We were able to observe how skilful interactions are helping support children to develop their love of story and their confidence in counting and sorting. As a team, practitioners should develop further consistent, high quality interactions to extend children's thinking and deepen their learning across the curriculum.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals. Across the nursery, practitioners need to improve their use of observation as part of effective assessment. They should continue to develop their understanding of early learning, for example by exploring children's schematic play.
- As planned, children's individual learning journals should now be improved further to capture what is significant about each child's individual learning journey. This will ensure that they provide a more holistic picture of children's progress to inform accurate decisions about future learning and support.
- Parents and carers are involved in agreeing some early learning goals for children. They now need to be involved more fully in planning and in recognising children's learning and achievements. This will enable parents and carers to play as fully as possible a role in supporting learning in the nursery, at home, and in the community.
- Practitioners are beginning to develop more confidence in using new planning approaches based on local guidance. They should now have support to develop this further. Practitioners

working with children aged two to three years use observations and information from parents and carers to help plan for individual children's care and learning. Practitioners working with older children take account of children's interests and needs in planning learning experiences. They adapt learning experiences in response to children's engagement and ideas. Practitioners recognise that they now need to involve children in planning and evaluating learning more fully.

- Senior leaders have identified the need to continue to develop processes to track and monitor children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- Practitioners use national and local guidance to plan experiences and environments for children. Senior leaders need to improve monitoring and self-evaluation to accurately evaluate and improve how well experiences support all children to make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Practitioners should work with parents, and colleagues in the primary school, to create an appropriate curriculum rationale that reflects the context of the nursery. In doing so, they should take full account of the curriculum design principles, with particular reference to challenge and depth.
- Practitioners are developing an increased focus of literacy and numeracy experiences for children. There are strengths in aspects of literacy, including children's enjoyment of story. Practitioners should continue with plans to support children's phonological awareness. They should have a stronger focus on extending children's vocabulary.
- Practitioners make appropriate use of the community to enhance children's experiences. Children share their learning and learn about the jobs that people do during visits to a neighbouring care home. Practitioners should now support children to begin to make links between the skills they are developing in the nursery, and the world of work.
- Transitions in to, and within the nursery are flexible and tailored to the needs of children and families. As children move into P1 children are able to settle quickly into the routines of the school. Practitioners should now work with colleagues in the school to develop a shared understanding of high quality early learning across the early level. This will help to ensure children experience continuity and challenge in learning and teaching as they move to P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See choice Quality Indicator.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- A warm and welcoming ethos supports children to feel safe and secure in their environment. Relationships across the nursery are positive which result in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Practitioners know individual children well, which ensures continuity in their care and learning. They are responsive in their interactions and children readily approach them when they require help and support. Overall children's behaviour is observed to be positive and appropriate to their age and stage of development. Practitioners should continue to promote positive behaviour through positive relationships.
- The team continue to develop a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). However, there is recognition that these could be better shared with children and parents. Practitioners and children are at the early stages of using the language of the wellbeing indicators across all aspects of their work. As planned, practitioners should now consider ways in which to embed further the wellbeing indicators, making them more meaningful and relevant for children and parents.
- Children are observed to be happy and confident, both indoors and outdoors. Freeflow outdoor learning supports children to be healthy and active through engagement in a variety of experiences. The opportunity to share and take turns with their peers was evident as they explored their developing outdoor space.
- Children have a healthy snack and take responsibility for serving themselves. There is a well-established lunch routine and children are observed engaging in a positive lunchtime experience with their peers. They are developing their personal hygiene skills, for example, tooth brushing. We discussed increasing opportunities for children to take a leadership role, for example, risk assessing outdoors.
- The senior management team should ensure that all practitioners keep up to date with relevant training and guidance in order to fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties. They should also ensure that there are rigorous procedures in place to make sure that significant events and information are appropriately recorded and monitored in chronologies. We discussed with the nursery the need to review and refresh current policies and procedures, ensuring these are in line with the changes to the service. The senior leadership team should review children's plans as a matter of urgency to ensure all children are being supported appropriately
- Most children who face barriers to their learning have individual plans put in place in consultation with families and other agencies where appropriate. Management and practitioners should ensure processes and systems are robust and consistently capture all relevant information about individual children. There is a need to continue to build confidence across the team to ensure best possible use is made of assessment information. This will ensure all practitioners understand what they need to do to support children and continue to plan for their wellbeing, care and learning.

- Practitioners treat children fairly and respect their individual likes and dislikes. They should continue to explore how they can engage children and parents in relevant learning about equality and diversity.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Practitioners make skilled use of conversation, song and rhyme to support children aged two to three years in developing their language skills. Children are developing their awareness of early mathematical concepts in their play, for example exploring measure through repeated pouring and filling games. Practitioners help children begin to share their play through careful and sensitive interventions. As a result, there is a calm and positive mood in the playroom as children explore and investigate. Children are developing confidence in interactions with others and becoming more independent, for example at meal times and when moving around the playroom. Across the nursery, practitioners should make increased use of signs and visual cues to support children's developing communications skills.
- The majority of children aged three to five years are becoming more confident in talking about their experiences. A few children would benefit from focused support to develop their early communication skills. Rhyming books, songs and listening games help children to develop their attention, and their awareness of the sounds in spoken language. A few enjoyable experiences help children to become confident in exploring and retelling familiar tales. Children choose to mark-make in a range of contexts and are becoming aware of written language. Most children are learning to recognise their written name, for example, at self-registration. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to make and use a range of non-fiction texts.
- There is a strong focus on counting. The majority of children are beginning to recite numbers, count and recognise symbols in the course of their play. A few children confidently count beyond ten. Most children can recognise and name colours. As planned, practitioners should now provide further challenging, real-life opportunities to extend and deepen children's skills across the breadth of the numeracy and mathematics curriculum.
- Children are developing their social skills well through enjoyable experiences such as eating together. They are developing physical skills, including fine motor skills, through a range of experiences indoors and outdoors. Children greatly enjoy, and benefit from, daily access to outdoor play. There is scope for children to develop further their understanding of how to they can take care of their own wellbeing, for example through keeping safe, active, and healthy.
- Children's achievements at home are recognised and celebrated within children's individual learning journals. We discussed with practitioners how they might now use information about

children's achievements at home, and in the community, to inform assessment and planning better.

- Practitioners are aware of their responsibility to promote equity for children throughout their work with children and families. They are effective in creating a supportive and welcoming ethos for children and families. There is scope to improve further support for children who may experience barriers to their learning. Improved use of monitoring and assessment will enable practitioners to evaluate how well strategies support children, and plan future interventions.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnerships
- Impact on children and families

- Overall partnerships with parents are very positive, with recent engagement evident in the Garden Book. Parents complete an 'All about me 1' when children start the setting and a further 'All about me 2' when they transition from the 2-3 playroom to the 3-5 playroom. Children's special books are available for parents to view and contribute to in relation to achievements. We discussed with the nursery ways in which to capture and celebrate achievements for children, parents and practitioners.
- Opportunities to engage with parents through planned programmes have temporarily ceased due to staff changes, however plans to restart this are in place. Bookbug classes will be developed shortly and a forthcoming coffee morning will allow parents to contribute their ideas for future engagement. Overall parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaires were positive about their experience at Loudoun-Montgomery Primary School. Parents spoken to during the inspection were pleased with the service they receive and the positive relationships and communication with practitioners.
- Wider partnership engagement includes links with health professionals, local superstores and the Fullarton Hub. There are weekly visits to a local care home where children and residents take part in a range of activities. This supports children to develop their social interaction and confidence within their local community. Practitioners should now consider how to maximise opportunities to develop children's skills for learning, life and work.
- Children's progress and achievements are captured and shared with parents. Opportunities for formal parents meetings are offered every term. Children's voices are beginning to be captured, an example of this is evident in the Garden book. Further opportunities for children to become involved in making decisions about their learning should be explored.

1. Quality of care and support

During this inspection we considered whether children and their families had access to the right support at the right time. In addition we looked at individual children's personal plans, as well as evidencing that children and their families were listened to, were safe and protected from harm. We found that outcomes for children and their families in these areas was adequate (Health and Social Care Standards 1.13, 1.15, 1.23, 2.17, 3.1 and 3.20).

Staff had successfully established a warm, nurturing and caring environment. We observed children, and their parents being included into the nursery, we suggested that the service considers the 'open door policy' they currently offer can be further enhanced and developed. Staff recognised the importance of working in partnership with parents. We saw examples of staff supporting children who were less confident in expressing their views and preferences.

The staff team worked hard to ensure that communication with parents and children was active and current; we saw evidence of newsletters and daily discussions with parents. Staff and management knew the children and their families very well and had their interests at the heart of the service they provided. Staff engaged with parents, children and other agencies to build a clear picture of the child.

The nursery had individual personal plans in place, these should be enhanced to include children and their parent's aspirations with regards to health, welfare and safety and should then be linked to the planning, evaluation and observation cycles. We also suggested that the personal plans reflect the progression children have made in these areas. Management should continue to ensure plans are consistently in place within 28 days of the child starting in the service, reflect individual children's health welfare and safety needs and be reviewed when required, or at least once in every six month period (Recommendation 1).

From discussion with staff it was clear that the nursery involved parents and partner agencies to ensure all children benefited from the right support at the right time. This should be robustly recorded in order to ensure targets are identified, evaluations are effective and children's progress is evident. Children and their families had access to a nurturing approach, from a staff team who understood nurturing principles and effectively delivered these.

Staff worked together as a team. Informal consultation with parents, children and staff helped to identify what was working well and where improvements could be made. Progress had been made in the service improvement plan, including development of sound discrimination and children having access to a nurturing environment.

The staff team's understanding of child protection procedures should be further clarified, and a clear approach adopted to ensure that robust safeguarding procedures are in place. (Requirement 1)

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

2. Quality of environment

During this inspection we considered how the environment supported children to direct their own play and learning. We looked closely at whether children had access to a wide range of experiences and resources within a safe indoor and outdoor environment. We found that the environment was offering good outcomes and experiences for children in this area (HSCS 1.32, 2.27, 5.17).

The environment was calm, warm and welcoming for children. Children were happy and relaxed within the nursery and relationships were positive throughout. We saw very young children being nurtured and settling very quickly in to the two year old room. The nursery environment was safe and secure with the key pads on doors and a visual entrance door bell.

Effective health and safety procedures had been developed, risk assessments had been established that were well thought out and linked to a risk matrix. The indoor environment should continue to be assessed. A risk benefit approach had been used in the outdoor environment, enabling children to take controlled risks in their play experiences. During the inspection visit we observed good hand washing procedures and found infection control measures were in place. We sampled accident and incident records and found these were recorded. These should be consistently shared with parents timeously. We requested that staff establish a process to audit accidents and incidents in order to avoid any patterns establishing.

The nursery had two open plan play rooms, with both rooms having direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor area. The nursery has recently established very good links with the local community to widen children's experiences, these opportunities included visits to the neighbouring nursing homes, Tesco and very good relationships with the community hub. We visited the local nursing home with a small group of children who confidently played snap with the residents, read stories with puppets and sang songs; culminating in a very positive experience for both age groups.

Children confidently planned their own play from the activities and resources available. As a result, we saw happy, curious children engaging with the play environment. Areas were attractive and set up to encourage different types of play including cooperative, imaginative and loose parts play. Within the role play area children were provided real food and utensils promoting real life play experiences. New planning had been recently implemented and should continue to be developed and embedded to ensure high quality experiences are provided.

Care Inspectorate grade: good

3. Quality of staffing

During this inspection we considered whether staff were trained, competent, skilled and able to reflect on their practice to provide the right care and support for children at the right time. We considered how skilled staff were in supporting children to resolve conflict and build positive relationships with others. We found that the outcomes for children in this area were adequate (HSCS 1.19, 2.15, 3.14, 3.17).

The nursery had recently been through a period of considerable change, with regards to an expansion to 1140 hours, increased numbers of registered children, an introduction of a provision for two year olds and a considerable increase in staff; who worked a new shift style pattern. As a result we saw a newly formed staff team who were professional, enthusiastic and motivated.

Staff are not directly recruited by the nursery, however in-house processes had been put in place to ensure that all staff worked collaboratively as a team to ensure positive outcomes and quality experiences were available for children and their families. The service provider should review this practice. (Recommendation 2)

Staff told us they felt well supported by the Headteacher and able to approach the depute Headteacher when matters required. A new Manager had been temporarily recruited to the nursery; the provider should clarify the role and remit of this post in order to avoid confusion of management roles.

Temporary staff told us they did not have access to continued professional development opportunities, this should be reviewed by the provider. A range of training should be identified in order to keep staff knowledge up to date to ensure outcomes for children are being positively affected by training that staff had attended. Staff showed awareness of the impact the training they had attended was having on the outcome for the children in the nursery. We saw clear evidence of phonological awareness training and sensory awareness training that staff members had attended having an impact on outcomes for children in the nursery and two year old room. We suggested that staff continue to reflect the impact of their training in their Scottish Social Service Council Post Registration Training and Learning Logs. (Recommendation 3)

Policies and procedures were in place; these had been developed and updated to reflect the working practices that the nursery operated. These should continue to reflect local and national best practice guidelines. Staff should continue to be included in this process and the policies reviewed regularly.

Staff were knowledgeable and engaged in professional dialogue throughout the inspection visit. During the inspection visit we observed occasions that outcomes for children were improving as a direct result of the staff team engaging the family in the learning process. Partner agencies that we spoke with told us about families who were previously struggling to cope and who were now working well with staff and the nursery.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

4. Quality of management and leadership

During this inspection we considered how well children and their families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement whilst looking for assurance that their human rights were being respected. We found that the service was adequate in these areas (Health and Social Care Standards 1.2, 2.3, 4.11, 4.19 and 4.23).

The headteacher and manager had established communication and working relationships. There was evidence to show that they met regularly, however the minutes of these meetings should be dated to ensure progression and development can be systematically monitored.

Processes to monitor and supervise the nursery should be robustly established, this will ensure that continuous improvement throughout the nursery is consistently and robustly monitored. The headteacher should ensure effective shared understanding of learning outcomes for children are in place. The headteacher should also consider how devolved and delegated leadership opportunities are created. (Recommendation 4).

Policies and procedures were in place; these should continue to be developed and updated to reflect the good working practices that the nursery operated and local and national best practice

guidelines. A GDPR Policy should be developed to reflect the practice in the service, and risk assessments undertaken to ensure the children's data is safe and protected. Staff should continue to be included in this process and the policies reviewed regularly.

Parents told us they had confidence in the quality of the service provided for their children by the staff team. Parents felt their children were safe and happy and that they benefited from the wide range of play and learning experiences provided. Parents particularly commented positively on the involvement and communication they experienced.

We heard that the management team had a vision for the future development of the service. Staff told us that they felt included in the life of the nursery, school and a big part of the local community.

Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there is one requirement and four recommendations.

Requirement

- By 31 March 2019, the provider must ensure that child protection procedures are reviewed and updated to ensure the procedures are clear and accurate with regards to the responsibility of reporting of concerns. This is to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care services) Regulations 2011 SSI 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Welfare of Service Users, and to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20).

Recommendations

- Management and staff should consistently and robustly ensure that personal plans for each child clearly set out how they meet individual's health, welfare and safety needs. The Personal Plans should show progression. The Personal Plan should be linked to the planning, tracking and assessment cycle. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'My Personal Plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15).
- In order that a consistent, effective and well recruited staff team cares for children, and their families, the provider should consider ways to include the nursery in the centralised recruitment process. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I can take part in recruiting and training people if possible' (HSCS 4.9) and 'I am confident that the people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited' (HSCS 4.24)
- In order that competent and well trained staff care for children in Loudoun Montgomery Primary School Nursery, the provider should ensure that all staff have access to continued professional development. A training needs analysis should be developed. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

- In order to ensure that the nursery benefits from continuous improvement, the headteacher should develop rigorous and systematic monitoring and supervisory procedures for assessing and improving the nursery. Devolved and delegated leadership roles and responsibilities should be considered. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HCSC4.23)

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.